

# TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES

for Canada's Substance  
Use Workforce v. 3

## MEDICATIONS



Canadian Centre  
on Substance Use  
and Addiction

Evidence. Engagement. Impact.



Canadian Centre  
on Substance Use  
and Addiction

All behavioural indicators across proficiency levels are examples only and can be adapted or tailored to meet individual organizational needs and mandates.

For CCSA's competencies, substance use is inclusive of situations where professionals are working with individuals who use or have used substances, are diagnosed with a medically recognized substance use disorder or are experiencing harms as a result of using substances. For more information, please refer to the criteria for substance use disorders in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (DSM-5).

For more information on sex- and gender-based analysis (SGBA+), please visit [www.ccsa.ca/sex-and-gender-based-analysis](http://www.ccsa.ca/sex-and-gender-based-analysis)

© Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, 2021

For additional copies, contact  
CCSA, 75 Albert St., Suite 500  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5E7  
Tel.: 613-235-4048  
Email: [competencies@ccsa.ca](mailto:competencies@ccsa.ca)

ISBN 978-1-77178-817-5

## MEDICATIONS

Explains the use of medications in the treatment and management of substance use and mental health conditions and responds to ongoing needs related to medication management and treatment.

### EXAMPLES

1 = Foundational	2 = Developing	3 = Proficient	4 = Advanced
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explains in general terms the type of medications that are the most prone to producing dependency and those that are used:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To treat substance use</li> <li>To address mood, behaviour and cognitive processes</li> <li>To treat pain</li> <li>To treat co-related conditions, like organ failure, heart and lung diseases, hepatitis, HIV and AIDS, etc.</li> </ol> </li> <li>Explains the common side effects of medications used to treat substance use and the potential sex-differentiated impacts of using them incorrectly</li> <li>Explains the signs and symptoms of adverse drug reactions, and consults with more senior professionals if adverse reactions are suspected</li> <li>Monitors people for signs of incorrect use of medication, and consults with more senior professionals if incorrect usage is suspected</li> <li>Explains prescription take-back initiatives</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explains the way that medications that alter mood, behaviour and cognitive processes are:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administered</li> <li>Likely to interact with other substances, including alcohol</li> </ol>               And explains the impact:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When use of the drug is stopped</li> <li>When the drug is used improperly</li> </ol> </li> <li>Reviews research about medications, such as methadone or buprenorphine, that are used to treat substance use</li> <li>Consults with professionals prescribing medications, when necessary</li> <li>Discusses with people their right to use or not use medications</li> <li>Supports individual access to prescribed medications where barriers are present</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides most current evidence and information about available approaches (e.g., harm reduction; sex specific) or practices for the use of medication to treat substance use or concurrent conditions</li> <li>Explains with accuracy and detail how medications that affect mood, behaviour and cognitive processes:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affect females and males physiologically and neurologically</li> <li>Can have different impacts depending on how they are administered (e.g., dosages, forms of medication, etc.), and their benefits and drawbacks</li> <li>Can have an impact on people if taken alone or if taken in combination with other substances, including alcohol</li> </ol> </li> <li>Identifies women, men and gender-diverse people who could potentially benefit from augmenting other treatment approaches with medications</li> <li>Collaborates with people, teams and medical professionals to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate medications into individual treatment plans, if appropriate</li> <li>Monitor the impact of prescribed medications</li> </ol> </li> <li>Assesses people to identify symptoms of adverse reactions for overuse or misuse of medications and initiates consultation with medical professionals or emergency medical services, as required</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applies comprehensive knowledge about the use of medications in treating substance use in:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with people</li> <li>Supervising or coaching others</li> <li>Overseeing or reviewing treatment plans</li> <li>Collaborating and networking</li> <li>Advocating for evidence-informed practices</li> </ol> </li> <li>Builds and maintains a network of resources skilled in the area of medication management and interventions</li> <li>Educates or arranges for professional development of others on the: types of medications that mitigate or aggravate issues related to substance use, and the sex and gender factors affecting the use and prescription of medication</li> <li>Initiates, facilitates or leads in developing and implementing evidence-informed practices and policies that support the innovative use of medications in treating substance use</li> </ol>